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To: The Honorable Members of the Appropriations Committee
From: The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters
RE: The Governor's Biennium Budget Proposal 2010-2011
Date: February 17, 2009

In 2003, the Legislature's budget cuts included complete elimination of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Dozens of groups representing thousands of citizens who to this day count on the CEQ for assistance successfully made the case for CEQ's far reaching importance to our state, and the Legislature wisely restored the funding.

Attached is a long list of groups that came together in 2003 to urge the legislature not to destroy this important environmental agency. Six years later, we continue to recognize the unmatched benefits that CEQ confers on Connecticut.

By eliminating the staff and funding for CEQ, this year's proposal to merge CEQ with the Department of Environmental Protection effectively eliminates CEQ's functions altogether. Adding CEQ's responsibilities to an agency that is already severely understaffed and underfunded is completely inconsistent with the basic principles of good government. The proposed transfer of responsibilities becomes a ruse for abolishing a watchdog that holds the executive branch accountable for carrying out the laws designed to protect and preserve our natural resources.

Before you vote to eliminate CEQ and its modest \$170,000 annual budget, we urge you to consider the costs that CEQ's work allows Connecticut to *avoid*. For example, its work to streamline the CT Environmental Policy Act has resulted in substantial savings in the cost that state agencies incur to comply with this law.

CEQ must be independent from DEP. One of CEQ's vital functions is to provide the public with a place to turn to when the state is not fulfilling its obligations to protect the air, land, water and wildlife of our many communities. We cannot seriously expect DEP, or any other agency, to be its own watchdog and candidly report how effectively the agency is carrying out its duties.



August 1, 2003

To: Representative Moira Lyons, Speaker of the House
Senator Kevin Sullivan, President Pro Tempore
Senator Louis DeLuca, Republican Leader
Representative Robert Ward, Minority Leader
Cc: Members of the House and Senate

From: The Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Dear Sir/Madam:

The following Connecticut environmental organizations are deeply concerned about the last minute elimination of the **Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)**. As a foundation stone of Connecticut environmental governance since 1971, the Council has been essential to monitoring the health of our state's natural resources, the health of our citizens, as well as providing the opportunity for people to be heard when they have specific environmental concerns.

We urge you to do whatever is necessary to reinstate funding for the Council on Environmental Quality.

All Aboard 860-278-5022
Audubon Connecticut (National Audubon Society) 203-264-5098
Candlewood Lake Authority
Clean Water Action 860-728-1254
CT Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions, Inc. 860-896-4731
CT Conservation Association
CT Federation of Lakes 860-354-6928
CT Section of the International Dark-Sky Association
CT Forest and Park Association 860-346-2372
CT Fund for the Environment 203-787-0646
CT League of Conservation Voters 860-524-1194
CT League of Women Voters
CT Public Interest Research Group (ConnPIRG) 860-233-7554
CT River Watershed Coalition
Citizens for a Sensible Six
Environment and Human Health 203-248-6582
Environment Northeast
Middlesex Clean Air Association
Naubesatuck Watershed Council
People's Action for Clean Energy (PACE) 860-693-4813
Rivers Alliance of CT 860-693-1602
Save the Sound
Sierra Club of CT 860-525-2500
The Nature Conservancy of CT 860-344-0716
The Trust for Public Land
Quinnipiac Watershed Partnership 203-401-2718
Quinnipiac River Watershed Association 203-281-4326
Woodlands Coalition 203-226-5886

Thank You.